

## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-57 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 58-77 are added. The following is the status of the claims of the above-captioned application, as amended.

### Claims 1-57 (Canceled)

Claim 58 (New). A mutated prokaryotic cell, which has a reduced expression-level of YusZ (SEQ ID NO's: 2 or 25), YusX (SEQ ID NO: 4), or homologues thereof, and which secretes higher amounts of at least one heterologous polypeptide of interest, when compared with an otherwise isogenic but non-mutated cell.

Claim 59 (New). The cell of claim 58, which is a Gram-positive cell.

Claim 60 (New). The cell of claim 58, which is a *Bacillus* cell.

Claim 61 (New). The cell of claim 60, which is a *B.alkalophilus*, *B.amyloliquefaciens*, *B.brevis*, *B.circulans*, *B.clausii*, *B.coagulans*, *B.lautus*, *B.lentus*, *B.licheniformis*, *B.megaterium*, *B.stearothermophilus*, *B.subtilis*, or *B.thuringiensis* cell.

Claim 62 (New). The cell of claim 58 wherein the YusZ or YusX homologues comprise an amino acid sequence at least 70% identical to the sequence shown in SEQ ID NO's: 2 or 25; or SEQ ID NO: 4, respectively.

Claim 63 (New). The cell of claim 58, which is mutated in *yusZ* (SEQ ID NO's: 1 or 24), *yusX* (SEQ ID NO: 3), and/or *yusY* (SEQ ID NO: 5), or homologues thereof.

Claim 64 (New). The cell of claim 63, wherein the *yusZ*, *yusX*, and/or *yusY* homologues encode a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence at least 70% identical to the sequence shown in SEQ ID NO's: 2 or 25, SEQ ID NO: 4, or SEQ ID NO: 6, respectively.

Claim 65 (New). The cell of claim 63, wherein the *yusZ*, *yusX*, and/or *yusY* homologues have a nucleotide sequence at least 70% identical to the sequence shown in SEQ ID NO's: 1 or 24, SEQ ID NO: 3, or SEQ ID NO: 5, respectively.

Claim 66 (New). The cell of claim 58, which is mutated in at least one polynucleotide, where a subsequence having a size of at least 100 bp of the at least one polynucleotide hybridizes with a polynucleotide having the sequence shown in SEQ ID NO's: 1 or 24, SEQ ID NO: 3, or SEQ ID NO: 5, or the respective complementary sequences, under medium stringency hybridization conditions.

Claim 67 (New). The cell of claim 58, wherein the at least one heterologous polypeptide comprises an enzyme.

Claim 68 (New). A method for producing a polypeptide of interest, said method comprising the steps of:

- a) cultivating a mutated prokaryotic cell, which has a reduced expression-level of YusZ (SEQ ID NO's: 2 or 25), YusX (SEQ ID NO: 4), or homologues thereof, and which secretes higher amounts of the polypeptide of interest, when compared with an otherwise isogenic but non-mutated cell; and
- b) isolating the polypeptide of interest.

Claim 69 (New). The method of claim 68, wherein the cell is a Gram-positive cell.

Claim 70 (New). The method of claim 68, wherein the cell is a *Bacillus* cell.

Claim 71 (New). The method of claim 70, wherein the cell is a *B.alkalophilus*, *B.amyloliquefaciens*, *B.brevis*, *B.circulans*, *B.clausii*, *B.coagulans*, *B.lautus*, *B.lentus*, *B.licheniformis*, *B.megaterium*, *B.stearothermophilus*, *B.subtilis*, or *B.thuringiensis* cell.

Claim 72 (New). The method of claim 68, wherein the YusZ or YusX homologues comprise an amino acid sequence at least 70% identical to the sequence shown in SEQ ID NO's: 2 or 25, or SEQ ID NO: 4, respectively.

Claim 73 (New). The method of claim 68, wherein the cell in step (a) is mutated in *yusZ* (SEQ ID NO's: 1 or 24), *yusX* (SEQ ID NO: 3), and/or *yusY* (SEQ ID NO: 5), or homologues thereof.

Claim 74 (New). The method of claim 73, wherein the *yusZ*, *yusX*, and/or *yusY* homologues encode a polypeptide having an amino acid sequence at least 70% identical to the sequence shown in SEQ ID NO's: 2 or 25, SEQ ID NO: 4, or SEQ ID NO: 6, respectively.

Claim 75 (New). The method of claim 73, wherein the *yusZ*, *yusX*, and/or *yusY* homologues have a nucleotide sequence at least 70% identical to the sequence shown in SEQ ID NO's: 1 or 24, SEQ ID NO: 3, or SEQ ID NO: 5, respectively.

Claim 76 (New). The method of claim 68, wherein the cell in step (a) is mutated in at least one polynucleotide, wherein a subsequence having a size of at least 100 bp of the at least one polynucleotide hybridizes with a polynucleotide having the sequence shown in SEQ ID NO's: 1 or 24, SEQ ID NO: 3, or SEQ ID NO: 5, or the respective complementary sequences, under medium stringency hybridization conditions.

Claim 77 (New). The method of claim 68, wherein the at least one polypeptide of interest comprises an enzyme.